

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 13, 2014

Meeting No.: 196

Project: 3200 St. Paul Street

Phase: Continued Revised Final

Location: 33rd and St. Paul Streets

PRESENTATION:

This project is part of an approved PUD and the specific building site was given schematic design approval by UDARP in late 2007. The project was reviewed previously on October 23, 2014. Nick Mansperger, building architect of Design Collective, presented the modifications to the building since the last UDARP meeting; Brian Reetz, landscape architect of Design Collective, presented the site plan.

Site:

- The sidewalk along St. Paul ranges in width from 17' - 19'. Additional rain-garden/tree planters extend that width another 7' to face of curb. 6' x 20' opening rain-gardens have curb-cuts on the sidewalk side for water intrusion. Street trees - Platanus acerifolia (London Plane Tree) – are planted along St. Paul spaced 30' on center (o.c.).
- Along St. Paul, a 7' band of brick pavers are set behind a concrete (granite?) curb, then scored concrete to the face of the building.
- The sidewalk along 33rd Street side, a 9' walkway of scored concrete is set between a 2' band of cobbles behind the street curb and a 5' band of cobbles within which Ulmus americana 'New Harmony' (New Harmony American Elm) are planted. Accent plantings in beds or commercial, occupiable spaces comprise the remainder of the width of space between curb and building façade. A larger, framed accent planting bed with a specimen tree cited as Cladastis kentukea (Yellowwood) occupies the space in front of the lobby.
- The corner sidewalk of St. Paul and 33rd Streets is comprised of brick pavers.

Building:

Comments from the previous submission were addressed:

- The architects have modified the height and segmentation of the retail components along St. Paul.
- Notwithstanding the “anchor” tenant, the retail along St. Paul has been rationalized into 50' bays with centralized doorways, signage elements and canopies over every door.
- One floor above retail (a residential floor) has been acknowledged with dark paneling. That paneling separates the tower element from the remainder of the brick façade and from a two-story attic at the roofline. This results in a frame that creates a floating brick façade for the extent of St. Paul Street.
- In an effort to create “playfulness”, the architects have every third vertical window expression and combined two floors into a bay element that is slightly protruding from the façade. These bays are also expressed on 33rd Street. Specialty amenity programming is expressed as on St. Paul at the corner adjacent to the Jefferson Building, and on 33rd at the corner of Lovegrove.
- The brick “tower element” has been disengaged from the corner.
- Concern over the visibility of student living rooms was addressed with the addition of standardized blinds over the windows and standardized furnishings.

Comments from the Panel:

After clarifications of intent during the questions period, the Panel offered the following specific comments and suggestions:

1. The building should be “rooted” in the neighborhood fabric. The two-story “attic” at the top reads very well. The darkness of the paneling along the attic and at the base of the brick façade, however, are not typical of the neighborhood character.
2. With reference to the St. Paul Street façade, the extent of the massing feels long. Consider breaking up the façade, where possible, so that it might address the adjacent Jefferson structure.
3. The louvers that flank either side of the retail entries should be anchored in a material rather than embraced by the adjacent glazing.
4. The composition of the “lobby box” and the lobby entry canopy need reconsideration – they should be considered as one element. The tenant entry should be considered a primary element within the composition of the façade.
5. The panel offered a mixed response with regard to the “amenity boxes.” There is some concern that the 33rd Street and Lovegrove amenity box should not address Lovegrove, as it is a utility street. It is generally agreed that the amenity boxes should be considered in a similar manner as the extruded bay windows.
6. The tone of the dark paneling used to frame the brick façade should be lighter in character – the sample selection of cast stone, stone and paneling appear too dark.
7. The canopy elements along 33rd Street are responding to the change of elevation along that street, however, they appear irregular in the composition of the façade. All canopies should be considered as elements in the design of the facades, not a tenant option.
8. The composition of the sidewalks utilizes too many materials. The site would benefit from simplification. The extensive use of brick should be reconsidered for precast concrete pavers, cobbles, and cast concrete.
9. *Ulmus americana* ‘New Harmony’ is not a proven variety against Dutch Elm Disease (DED). Another species along 33rd Street may want to be considered.
10. Representations of stormwater catchments along St. Paul should be accompanied by grading plans that characterize how the sidewalks will slope to capture stormwater in the tree pits.
11. This project should be a leader in bicycle storage and use.
12. Streetscape plans should reflect a consideration of neighborhood goals – use it as a precedent in advance of Johns Hopkins’ Streetscape Plan.

Panel Action:

Recommend continued development. Prior to construction, the Streetscape should be revisited in order to reflect any changes that may result from the streetscape study that is about to begin.

Attending:

Kristin Ward, Brian Reetz, Michael Glaros, Nick Mansperger – Design Collective
Tony Nero, Alex Olson – Armada Hoffler
Jim Miller – Johns Hopkins University
Tim Pula – Beatty Development
Adam Bednar – The Daily Record
Ryan Potter - EGJ

UDARP Panel Members – Dr. Judith Meany, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns, David Haresign, and David Rubin*

Planning Department- Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Wolde Ararsa, Laurie Feinberg, Martin French